

Submission for Public Hearing March 14, 2013: gun safety legislation

Dear Committee Members,

As a new resident of Connecticut (my partner and I moved here from Washington, DC in July of 2012), I was shocked to learn that the state's gun laws were more lax than those of DC. The higher gun violence rates in DC and other cities like Chicago and Detroit are not the result of tougher gun laws, they are in spite of them and the result of other causes. However, most of the guns used in crimes in DC came from outside the District. Until we get really tough federal laws prohibiting gun trafficking, the least you can do is pass those laws here.

Most encouraging to me is the establishment of a Gun Registry for all owners of any firearm in Raised Bill 1076. Such a registry is critical in the enforcement of gun trafficking laws in that it establishes a documented baseline of firearm ownership for use by lawful enforcement only. This registry is not subject to public disclosure and therefore it does not unlawfully infringe upon a gun owner's rights. Without such a registry, I believe that it is difficult, if not impossible, to trace gun ownership in order to enforce existing laws that prohibit straw sales to those prohibited from lawfully acquiring guns. With such a registry, law enforcement at least has a record from which to trace ownership of guns used in crimes. The proposed background check is required for anyone applying for a firearm registration card gives real meaning to the entire scheme.

The improved definition of assault weapons is hopefully broad enough to cover reality. These killing machines may afford a small number of enthusiasts with a momentary thrill but their presence has brought such chronic carnage to Newtown and elsewhere that public safety must preclude citizen possession. I would, however, suggest total prohibition with a buy back program for existing weapons given their demonstrated tragic use.

Public safety similarly would include the proposed permit to possess any rifle or long gun with a background check and that all firearms be equipped with a reusable trigger lock, gun lock or other gun locking device.

The proposed limitation on ammunition sales should, however, be limited to the firearm for which the purchaser has a permit.

The proposed prohibited categories for those who are disqualified from receiving a rifle, pistol or revolver permit or an eligibility certificate and registry for offenders convicted of any gun offense are clearly necessary to at least eliminate the most dangerous ownership and Committee Bill 506's age 21 rifle permit limit simply contemplates reasonable maturity.

Support of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund by taxing firearm manufacturers and importers for each gun sold or imported into Connecticut finally recognizes that the industry's income has costly and tragic social consequences.

Committee Bill 506's requirement of criminal background checks for all firearm sales at long last closes the most graphic loophole in regulation and is necessary if we are to have an effective legislative scheme which is similarly true of Committee Bill 6251's required fingerprinting and criminal background checks for long gun sales; . Raised Bill 6595's prohibition of intentional

discharge of any firearm within 500 feet of any residence without owner permission relates to both public safety and nuisance.

In short, this legislative package is a long overdue beginning to restore public safety to Connecticut and quell the epidemic of fear and violence which has plagued our cities. I greatly look forward to further legislation in this area.

Respectfully,

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